

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 NOUAKC 00178 261616Z

53

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
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P R 261503Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5011

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY RABAT

S E C R E T NOUAKCHOTT 0178

EXDIS

DEPT PASS COMSIXTHFLT AND CINCUSNAVEUR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR MOPS MR SS

SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: REPORT OF MOROCCAN F-5 DOWN IN MAURITANIA

REF: RABAT 374, AMMAN 389

1. ACTING MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (AND MINSTATE FOR NATIONAL ECONOMY) SIDI 'ABDALLAHI MADE SPECIAL POINT OF TELLING ME MORNING JANUARY 24 THAT MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT COULD NOT RPT NOT CONFIRM MOROCCAN REPORT THAT ROYAL AIR FORCE FIGHTER AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN DOWNED IN MAURITANIAN TERRITORY DURING BATTLE AT 'AIN BIN TILLI. MINISTER DECLARED GIRM WAS AWARE THAT KING HASSAN HAD INFORMED FRENCH GOVERNMENT AND VISITING COMSIXTHFLT OF LOSS OF FIGHTER BY MISSILE FIRE, AND THAT VOICE OF AMERICA HAD ALREADY CARRIED MOROCCAN REPORT ON NEWSCASTS. (JANUARY 26 BBC WORLD SERVICE NEWS REPEATED STORY OF FIGHTER DOWN IN MAURITANIAN TERRITORY TOGETHER WITH GOM INTERPRETATION OF LOSS AS "PROOF" OF FOREIGN INTERVENTION.) AFTER EXPLAINING THAT GIRM HAD DECIDED AT OUTSET OF SAHARA CONFLICT TO LIMIT ITS PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS TO FACTS IT COULD PROVE OR COULD DEMONSTRATE IN POSITIVE FASHION, MINISTER STATED THAT GIRM WANTED AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO KNOW THAT GIRM HAD  
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FOUND NO TRACE OF DOWNED MOROCCAN FIGHTER IN MAURITANIAN

TERRITORY. WHILE NOTING THAT NORTHERN MAURITANIA CONSISTS OF LARGE EXPANSES OF SELDOM-VISITED DESERT WHERE DOWNED FIGHTER MIGHT HAVE CRASHED, 'ABDALLAHI CLEARLY IMPLIED GIRM DID NOT EXPECT TO FIND MOROCCAN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT ANYWHERE IN MAURITANIA. MINISTER ALSO DECLARED THAT GIRM WAS UNWILLING TO USE REPORT OF SUCCESSFUL MISSILE ATTACK TO "PROVE" FOREIGN INTERVENTION, ALTHOUGH ONE COULD DEDUCE THAT ANY MISSILE WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN INVOLVED HAD COME FROM OUTSIDE NORTHWEST CORNER OF AFRICA AND PERSON WHO FIRED IT (OR HIS INSTRUCTOR) HAD BEEN TRAINED OUTSIDE AREA.

2. AT VIRTUALLY SAME MOMENT MORNING JANUARY 24, VICE CHIEF OF STAFF TOLD VISITING DATT THAT MOROCCANS HAD LOST T-6 (TWO-PLACE LIGHT RECON AIRCRAFT) AT 'AIN BIN TILLI, AND THAT AIRCRAFT HAD APPARENTLY BEEN BROUGHT DOWN BY SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE. VICE CHIEF ALSO DECLARED THAT GIRM HAD NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER TO CONFIRM ASSERTIONS OF SOVIET, CUBAN, OR OTHER FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN SAHARAN FIGHTING.

3. AM NOT ENTIRELY SURE WHAT WE SHOULD MAKE OF CONFLICTING MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN REPORTS OF AIR LOSSES AND VARIANTS IN INTERPRETATIVE COMMENT, BUT AT MINIMUM PRUDENCE WOULD SUGGEST THAT USG SHOULD NOT RPT NOT PUBLICLY REPEAT F-5 STORY UNTIL IT CAN BE CONFIRMED IN POSITIVE FASHION. HANDYSIDE

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED.

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PUBLIC DISCLOSURE, FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, ALLEGATIONS, AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 26 JAN 1976  
**DecapTION Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**DecapTION Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** coburnhl  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976NOUAKC00178  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** 76 RABAT 374, 76 AMMAN 389  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** coburnhl  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 12 MAY 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <12 MAY 2004 by MartinML>; APPROVED <01 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SAHARA WATCH: REPORT OF MOROCCAN F-5 DOWN IN MAURITANIA  
**TAGS:** PBOR, MOPS, MR, SS, (SIDI ABDALLAHI)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006